

CHAPTER 12: RELIGION: CHARACTER, DIFFUSION, AND LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. All the great faiths arose within a few thousand years
 1. All arose within a few thousand kilometers of each other
 2. All started in South and Southwest Asia (Figure 12-1)
- II. Hinduism
 - A. Chronologically, the oldest of the major religions
 1. Appears to have began in the region of the Indus Valley
 2. May have arisen 4,000 years ago
 3. Has no evolving bureaucratic structures comparable with those of the Christian religions
 4. Fundamental doctrine is the *karma*—transferability of the soul
 5. The ideal is to escape from the eternal cycle through union with the *Brahman*
 6. *Reincarnation* is a cornerstone of the faith
 7. Doctrines are closely bound to India's *caste system*
 8. The *untouchables* are the lowest in the caste system
 9. Modernization during the colonial period and the work of Mahatma Gandhi loosened the social barriers of the caste system
 - B. Diffusion
 1. Hinduism was born in the western part of Indian subcontinent in what is now Pakistan
 2. Hindu thinkers attempted to assimilate certain new teachings from Christianity
 3. Hinduism has not spread by expansion diffusion in modern times
 4. Has remained a cultural region of South Asia
 5. Buddhism and Islam overtook much of the area originally Hindu
 6. Bali remains a Hindu outpost whose religion has become a syncretic faith
 7. Relocation diffusion did not form the foci of growing Hindu regions
 - C. Cultural landscape
 1. Hinduism is a way of life
 - a) Meals are religious rites
 - b) Pilgrimages follow prescribed routes
 - c) Rituals are attended by millions
 - d) Festivals and feasts are frequent, colorful, and noisy
 2. Hindus believe erection of a temple bestows merit on the builder
 3. Location of shrines is important because there should be minimal disruption of the natural landscape
 4. The faith is a visual as well as an emotional experience
- III. Buddhism
 - A. Appeared in India during the sixth century B.C. as a reaction to less desirable features of Hinduism
 1. *Jainism*—also was founded as a protest to Hinduism
 2. Buddhism was founded by Prince Siddhartha, known to his followers as Gautama
 3. Buddha was perhaps the first prominent Indian religious leader to speak out against Hinduism's caste system

- B. Diffusion
 1. The faith grew slowly after Buddha died in 489 B.C. at age 80
 2. Emperor Asoka carried the faith across India and to the outside world (Figure 12-1)
 3. As Buddhism spread, it declined in India
 4. Today Buddhism is fragmented into numerous branches
 5. Buddhism is experiencing a revival that started 200 years ago
 6. Appeal of Buddhism's principals has ensured its continued diffusion, notably in the
 - C. Cultural landscape
 1. The Bodhi tree has diffused as far as China and Japan as a symbol of the faith
 2. Buddhism's architecture style is famous for its pagodas
 - a) Its shape is derived from the relic mounds of old
 - b) Every fragment of its construction is a meaningful representation of Buddhist
- IV. Chinese religions
- A. Taoism
 1. Its beginnings are unclear
 2. Teachings focuses on the oneness of humanity and nature
 3. **Feng Shui**—the art and science of organizing living spaces to channel life forces that exist in nature in favorable ways
 4. Taoist virtues were simplicity and spontaneity, tenderness and tranquility
 5. It advocated against competition, possession, and the pursuit of knowledge
 6. War, punishment, taxation, and ceremonial ostentation were viewed as evils
 7. Became a cult of the masses
 - B. Confucianism
 1. Confucius was appalled at suffering of ordinary people at the hands of feudal lords
 2. Argued human virtues and abilities, not heritage, should determine a person's position
 3. After his death in 479 B.C. his teachings diffused throughout East and Southeast Asia
 4. His texts the *Confucian Classics*, became the focus of education in China for 2,000 years
 5. Elements of Taoism and Buddhism also formed part of the belief system
 - C. Diffusion
 1. Chinese religions are ethnic religions
 2. Confucianism diffused early into the Korean Peninsula, Japan, and Southeast Asia
 3. During the twentieth century political upheavals in China led to reactions against Chinese religions
 4. Chinese communist authorities leveled burial mounds because they took up too much ground suitable for farming
 - a) Led to strong opposition by tradition-bound villagers
 - b) Contributed to revolutionary changes of the 1970s
 - D. Cultural landscape
 1. Confucianism and Taoism not associated with landscapes distinct from Buddhism
 2. Have helped expand impact of Buddhist cultural influences because of their philosophical appeal
- V. Judaism
- A. The oldest major religion to emerge west of the Indus Valley
 1. Grew from the belief system of one of the Semitic tribes, the Jews, about 2000 B.C.
 2. History filled with upheavals
 3. With their holy city destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, the Jews scattered over the region
 4. Roots of Jewish tradition lie in the teachings of Abraham, who united his people

5. Incorporated elements of other religions
 6. Modern times have seen a division of Judaism into many branches
- B. Diffusion
1. **Diaspora**—tern that now signifies the spatial dispersion of members of any ethnic group
 2. Jews who went north into Central Europe came to be known as **Ashkenazim**
 3. **Sephardim**—Jews who scattered across North Africa and into the Iberian Peninsula
 4. The idea of a homeland developed into the ideology of **Zionism**
 5. Nazi campaign against Jews is discussed
 6. Israel, the Jewish state, was created in 1948 under UN auspices
 7. Has about 18 million adherents worldwide
- C. Cultural landscape
1. Presence of synagogues
 2. No single architectural style that characterizes synagogues
 3. Five pointed star appears on most Jewish graves
 4. The “Wailing Wall”
 - a) Western Wall at the edge of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem
 - b) Most symbolically important landscape feature for Jews
 - c) All that remains of the second temple
- VI. Christianity
- A. Had its beginning in the Jews' search for deliverance from Roman oppression, and the appearance of Jesus
1. Paul played a central role in organizing the Christian church
 2. Became the Roman state religion with the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 312
 3. Eastern Roman Empire, centered on Constantinople, became focus of the empire
 4. Today, the Eastern or Orthodox Church still forms one of the three major branches
 5. The papacy, established in Rome, was the center for Roman Catholics, the second branch of the church
 6. In the Middle Ages, the power of the church was at its zenith
 7. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Protestant movement arose
- B. Diffusion
1. Occurred as a combination of expansion and relocation diffusion during the era of
 2. Today, Christianity is the most widespread and largest of the global religions
 3. Characterized by aggressive and persistent proselytism of its proponents
- C. Cultural landscape
1. In Medieval Europe, the cathedral, church, or monastery was the focus of life
 - a) Other buildings clustered around the tallest tower, steeple, and spire of the church
 - b) Crowds gathered for ceremonies and festivals in the square in front of the church
 2. Cathedrals still rising above European townscapes are reminders of the Roman Catholic dominated history
 3. In Protestant regions, churches tend to blend into the local architecture
 4. Today the skyscraper dominates the cultural landscape in cities
 5. Imprint of death on the landscape
 - a) Christianity uses more land for the disposition of the departed than any other faith
 - b) Many other faiths cremate the dead
 - c) Cemeteries often resemble parks in their layout

- d) Cemeteries and funeral-related establishments represent a significant economic enterprise

D. Religions and culture regions in the United States

1. The Mormon culture region is only one of several in which religion is a crucial cultural component
2. Discussion of major religious regions in Figure 12-2
3. Christian denomination culture regions in the United States are better known and understood than similar regions in other geographic realms

VII. Islam

A. The youngest of the major faiths

1. Born of the teachings of Muhammad, who was born in A.D. 571
2. Came at a time when the Arab world was in religious and social disarray
3. Islam brought to the Arab world a unifying religious faith and a whole new set of values
4. The five pillars of Islam
5. Mosques were used not only for the Friday prayer, but also served as social gathering places to bring communities closer together
6. Mecca became the spiritual center
7. The new faith spread rapidly
8. Arab armies formed, invaded, and conquered
9. Islam was carried throughout North Africa
10. Figure 12-3 shows how far Islam had spread by the ninth century
11. Arabs established institutions of higher learning in many cities
12. The faith is still the heart of Arab culture

B. Regions and sects

1. A divided faith (Figure 11-1)
 - a) Orthodox Sunni Muslims
 - b) Shiite Muslims
2. Division has produced conflict between the two sects
 - a) Sunni Muslims believe in the effectiveness of family and community in solving life's problems
 - b) Shiite Muslims believe that the imam is sole source of true knowledge
3. **Imams**—Shiite Muslims leaders whose appointments are regarded as sanctioned by Allah
 - a) Thought to be without sin and infallible
 - b) Potent social as well as political force
4. Sunni Muslims have been influenced by Shiah Islam

C. Diffusion

1. Classical example of hierarchical diffusion from its source area (Figure 12-4)
2. Converted some animist trading partners outside of Christian strongholds to Islam
3. Expansions led to protracted conflicts between Christianity and Islam
4. Between 1095 and 1199 European political and religious leaders organized the **Crusades** to retake the so-called Holy Land
5. Other conflicts in the Holy Land followed between Christians and Muslims
6. Attracted converts wherever it took hold
7. Islam is experiencing resurgence, and its expansion is likely to continue

D. Cultural landscape

1. Mosques dominate the urban landscapes
 - a) They are the focus of life where the faithful are called to prayer five times a day

- b) Often constitute the most carefully maintained building in a town
- 2. Muslim architects combined their skills with Roman blueprints of an earlier age
 - a) Spain's Alhambra Palace in Granada
 - b) The Great Mosque of Cordoba
- 3. During the eleventh century, the glazing of tiles on domes and roofs became common
- 4. In architecture, Islam achieved its greatest artistic expression, its most distinctive visible element
 - a) It symbolizes the power of the faith and its role in the community
 - b) A confirmation that religion and culture are one